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Report of the Trade and Development Board on its thirtieth special session*

Geneva, 13 June 2016

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Trade and Development Board on its thirtieth special session, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 13 June 2016. It will appear in final form, together with the reports of the sixty-second executive session, the sixty-third session and the sixty-third executive session of the Board, as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 15* (A/71/15).

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Introduction

The thirtieth special session of the Trade and Development Board was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 13 June 2016. In the course of the session, the Board held two plenary meetings.

I. Action by the Trade and Development Board

A. Organization of the work of the fourteenth session of the Conference

Selection, by drawing lots, of the country that will head the seating pattern at the fourteenth session of the Conference

1. In accordance with established practice, Australia was drawn by lot to be first in the alphabetical order to be used for seating arrangements at the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

B. Substantive preparations for the fourteenth session of the Conference

2. The Trade and Development Board approved the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee for the fourteenth session of the Conference to officially transmit the most recent version of the negotiating text, circulated on 10 June and endorsed by the Preparatory Committee the morning of 13 June 2016, to the Conference.

3. The Board also decided to authorize the preparation and submission of reports for the two half-day hearings with civil society and the private sector, held on 6 April and 26 May 2016, as official documentation for the Conference.

C. Preparations for the review, by the fourteenth session of the Conference, of the lists of States annexed to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

4. The Board approved the application of Bosnia and Herzegovina, endorsed by Group D, to be moved from the States in list A to the list D States annexed to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX).

D. Other business

5. The Board also approved inclusion in the present report of the transfer of the Presidency of the Trade and Development Board from Mr. Alberto Pedro D'Alotto (Argentina) to Mr. Alfredo Suescum (Panama) as a formal record of the handover that took place on 11 April 2016, in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure of the Board.

II. President's summary

A. Opening statements

6. At the opening plenary meeting, the President of the Trade and Development Board welcomed the Principal Secretary and Ambassador of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya.

7. The Principal Secretary conveyed the full support of the Government of Kenya, and of the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as incoming President of the Conference. The keen interest of Kenya in hosting the Conference was owing to the relevance of the issues being deliberated for the country, as well as for all member States, and to the fact that the occasion would provide an opportunity to observe the fortieth anniversary of Kenya hosting the fourth session of the Conference, in 1976, at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre. She noted that the fourteenth session of the Conference would take place at an opportune moment, with a range of global challenges requiring sustainable solutions, recent transformative agendas agreed by world leaders and a Conference theme, moving from decisions to actions, that was well timed and resonated with the current realities faced. Thus, the outcome of the fourteenth session of the Conference would need to reaffirm the mandate of UNCTAD as the principal organ of the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and related issues in the areas of finance, investment, technology and sustainable development. That outcome should enable UNCTAD to play a central role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits.

8. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD expressed his appreciation for the work done to date on the road to the Conference in Nairobi. The negotiation process had been characterized largely by good will and mutual respect, despite natural differences in views, and hoped that that would continue and grow as negotiations progressed. He recalled that at the start of the negotiation process, it had been agreed that outstanding contentious issues should be resolved in Geneva, rather than being taken to the Conference. A change in approach to the negotiation process, focused on issues and agreeing on principles, could help to accelerate the pace. He underscored that between the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, data was the common factor. As a United Nations body, the primary focus of UNCTAD was developing countries. UNCTAD could serve as the home of South-South data, given the mandate, as a critical contribution to inter-agency cooperation, whether within the United Nations system or between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other similar international institutions that recognized the role that data could play. He noted consultations undertaken with representatives of the Government of Kenya to fast track preparations for a successful Conference, as well as efforts to mobilize different regional groups and ensure the highest levels of engagement. Finally, he called for solidarity to ensure a strong mandate for UNCTAD over the next four years.

9. The President of the Board also welcomed Mr. Nelson Ndirangu, Chair of the National Preparatory Committee and Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Kenya, who provided updated information on the logistical preparations for the Conference.

B. Substantive preparations for the fourteenth session of the Conference: Report of the Preparatory Committee
(Agenda item 3)

10. The President of the Trade and Development Board, speaking in his official capacity as Chair of the Preparatory Committee for the fourteenth session of the Conference, presented his report to the Board. He reminded delegations that at its sixty-second session the Board established an open-ended Preparatory Committee to produce a negotiated document for the Conference. While the committee would continue to meet until 8 July, its most recent consolidated text had been circulated to member States on 10 June. The Preparatory Committee had recommended to the Board that the text be transmitted officially the Conference. He called on delegations to accelerate negotiations and adopt more flexible formats.

11. Representatives of the following delegations made statements: Namibia, on behalf of the African Group; Chile, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; Pakistan, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group; the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; Bangladesh, on behalf of the least developed countries; Paraguay, on behalf of the landlocked developing countries; Barbados, on behalf of the small island developing States; Jamaica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Egypt, on behalf of the Arab Group; China; Nicaragua; the African Union; and Morocco.

12. All speakers thanked the President and the Friends of Chair for steering the preparatory process, as well as the UNCTAD secretariat for its support, and noted that progress had been made and ensured their continued commitment to a successful outcome of the Conference.

13. Recalling the multilateral decisions taken in 2015, many delegations expressed concern about the slow pace towards agreements on the draft outcome document, in particular on issues of importance to the mandate and work of UNCTAD and those of relevance to developing countries. They said that UNCTAD should be enabled to address all major issues of trade and development and all interrelated issues in a comprehensive manner, rather than having its role limited by the concept of comparative advantage. They attached great importance to issues such as technology transfer, debt management, tax evasion and avoidance, investment, aid and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNCTAD should treat those issues in all three of its pillars. They also attached great importance to principles such as the right to development, special and differential treatment, policy space and investor-State dispute settlement mechanisms. Those principles should be clearly reflected in the final document. The text should also reflect issues relating to the State of Palestine, unilateral coercive measures and challenges confronted by countries in special conditions, including issues such as terrorism and hosting large numbers of refugees.

14. Some delegations felt that the consensus-building pillar needed reactivation in order to strengthen UNCTAD. One delegation called for a specific reference to

cotton and for action by UNCTAD in that regard to be reflected in the Conference document. Another delegation underlined the importance of regional integration and that that development dimension required particular support from the international community. Another delegation reaffirmed the importance of the quality of data and the impact of that data on South-South and other forms of international cooperation.

15. One delegation said that ensuring the competence and efficiency of UNCTAD was in the interest of all member States and that related management issues should be discussed by the Board, guided by UNCTAD meeting the needs of developing countries, which might require a reassessment of the applicability of certain evaluation criteria. Another delegation emphasized the reduction in transport costs as critical for trade to be an effective enabler of economic growth and poverty reduction and called for the inclusion of measures recommended in the Vienna Programme of Action to be incorporated into the UNCTAD programme of work.

16. Some delegations also called upon stronger political will of member States to resolve the outstanding issues in the negotiations. One delegation invited participants to look at the extensive statements made by the delegation at previous meetings of the Board regarding what and how the way forward should resemble.

III. Procedural and related matters

A. Adoption of the agenda
(Agenda item 1)

17. The Board adopted the provisional agenda, as contained in document TD/B(S-XXX)/1 (see annex I).

B. Organization of the work of the fourteenth session of the Conference
(Agenda item 2)

Outstanding organizational matters

18. The President informed the Trade and Development Board of the composition of the Bureau of the Conference, which would be elected based on geographical distribution.

C. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters
(Agenda item 4)

Preparations for the review, by the fourteenth session of the Conference, of the lists of States annexed to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)

19. The membership of UNCTAD and of the Trade and Development Board currently stands at 194. The latest version of the membership will be forwarded to the Conference for its endorsement.[1]

Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board

20. There were no additional applications from intergovernmental bodies for consideration by the Board.

Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board

21. There were no additional non-governmental organizations for consideration by the Board.

D. Other business
(Agenda item 5)

22. The calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2016 and a provisional calendar for 2017 will be reviewed at the next consultations of the President.

E. Adoption of the report of the Trade and Development Board
(Agenda item 6)

23. The Trade and Development Board authorized the President to complete the report on its thirtieth special session after the conclusion of the meeting.

[1] The updated membership list will be issued as document TD/B/INF.235.

Annex I

Agenda for the thirtieth special session of the Trade and Development Board

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session
2. Organization of the work of the fourteenth session of the Conference:
   (a) Selection, by drawing lots, of the country that will head the seating pattern at the fourteenth session of the Conference
   (b) Outstanding organizational matters
3. Substantive preparations for the fourteenth session of the Conference:
   - Report of the Preparatory Committee
4. Institutional, organizational, administrative and related matters:
   (a) Preparations for the review, by the fourteenth session of the Conference, of the lists of States annexed to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX)
   (b) Designation of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the Board
   (c) Designation of non-governmental organizations for the purposes of rule 77 of the rules of procedure of the Board
5. Other business
6. Adoption of the report of the Trade and Development Board

Annex II

Attendance[2]

1. Representatives of the following States members of the Trade and Development Board attended the session:

Algeria
Argentina
Bahamas
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Cambodia
Chad
Colombia
Czechia
Djibouti
Ecuador
Finland
France
Greece
Haiti
India
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Kuwait
Lesotho
Madagascar
Nicaragua
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
South Africa
Spain
Thailand
Tunisia
Uganda
United States of America

2. Representatives of the following member of the Conference attended the session:

Holy See

3. Representatives of the following non-member observer State attended the session:

State of Palestine

4. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

African, Caribbean and Pacific States
Organisation internationale de la francophonie
South Centre

5. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
World Trade Organization

6. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

General category

International Network for Standardization of Higher Education Degrees
World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows

[2] For the list of participants, see TD/B(S-XXX)/INF.1.